

## **Modern Love** by **Madame\_Ashley**

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**Summary:**

When Nancy insists that Jonathan join her and Steve at prom, Mr. Harrington offers Byers his prom prep services.

# Modern Love

## Author's Note:

- For [StarMaamMke](#).

“I know when to go out, and when to stay in,” Bowie intoned from beyond the bathroom door. Jonathan did a mental count to three, predicting exactly how long it would take for Steve to crank the volume. As expected, the song was soon on full blast - the pounding drum intro of “Modern Love” reverberating off of every wall. Harrington’s taste in music was pretty lousy – his affection for Foreigner was particularly horrifying. One of the few songs they both agreed on was the dance-rock perfection of Bowie’s leadoff track from the “Let’s Dance” album.

Jonathan patted his face dry and drained the sink, examining himself in the mirror. His current circumstances were confounding: could this really be him shaving and dressing for prom, a rented tux hanging from the shower curtain rod, while the soulful voice of a hunky senior crooned to him through the door, “There’s no sign of life, it’s just the power to charm. I’m lying in the rain...”

If someone had asked him a year ago whether he was looking forward his prom, Jonathan would likely have gifted said inquirer with a heated glare and some choice words. The annual high school gala was not intended for outliers, and the thought of showing up – probably alone – to a gymnasium full of taffeta-clad lemmings was the furthest from a good time that Jonathan could fathom.

Yet here he was dabbing at a small cut on his chin where the razor had slipped in his quivering hand, a palpable mix of excitement and terror fluttering in his stomach as he buttoned the starched white shirt up to his throat. He tucked the tails into crisply pressed black pants, clipped the teal bowtie under his collar and stood grimacing at the silky turquoise cummerbund dangling from the coat hanger.

The suit rental had been a gift from Nancy, Jonathan’s attendance being her idea. It was a foregone conclusion that she and Steve would be crowned King and Queen of the night, a tradition described by

Nancy as “sanctimonious bullshit.” If she was going to be put through the motions of a silly archaic ritual, she insisted on bringing along her two favourite gentlemen for support. Steve was up for anything of course, shooting Jonathan an affectionate look and remarking that it would be worth it “just to see Byers clean up his act.”

Nancy had long since recognized the seeming antagonism between the young men for what it really was: awkward flirting. Her acknowledgment of their attraction to each other only made the plan of attending together more necessary.

“Modern Love” had faded out and the first strains of Spandau Ballet assaulted Jonathan’s eardrums. He was already cringing as he hooked the atrocious cummerbund around his narrow waist, being subjected to the loathed ballad added insult to hearing damage. But “True” was one of Steve’s favourites, and his voice was in fine form as he belted out the verse – “This is the sound of my soul!”

“Good Lord, I hope not!” Jonathan growled, throwing open the door and hitching his jacket onto his shoulders. He shot his cuffs in an effort to get comfortable. The whole suit felt tight, confining and unpleasant.

Steve, looking as sexy in his suit as Jonathan was uncomfortable in his, put down the hairbrush he had been using as a microphone and stifled a laugh at Jonathan’s grouchy demeanour. “Between your face and your tux, Byers, you are truly a sight to behold,” he chuckled.

“You know what, Steve? Fuck you. I thought you were into this fancy shit.”

“Byers, I do love this fancy shit,” Steve said, approaching his sulky companion, and whispering into his ear, “Just not with you.” Steve slipped an index finger under Jonathan’s tie, snapping it off with a quick tug. His hands went to work on the top three buttons of his date’s dress shirt, Jonathan gasping as Steve stooped to plant light kisses across his exposed collarbone.

“And I think we can both agree that this was a dreadful mistake.” Steve reached under Jonathan’s jacket and around his waist, the cummerbund falling away with a flick of the wrist. They stood

holding each other speechlessly for a moment, then Jonathan went on his toes to kiss Steve's mouth, nipping gently at his lower lip before murmuring, "You look great, by the way. Time to pick up Hawkins' reluctant prom queen."

**Author's Note:**

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